4th Letter.

At sea.

Friday. 1st Nov.

No 64582. Lieut. J. H. Massey.
The Cheshire Regt.
Draft Serial. R. M. H. C. A.
G. H. Q. 2nd Echelon
Q
c/o. A. P. O. 725.

My sweet darling Barbara.

Here begins another of these serial letters - by the time you receive this, you will be sweeter & more darling to me. I'm not quite sure what I mean by that, because at the moment I cannot see how such a thing can be possible. But I do know that at the beginning of this voyage, I was missing you, painfully, thinking about you the greater part of the time - by now - it is barely four weeks since we were torn apart - you are in my mind practically every moment of the day & for a long time in bed each night - the pain of being without you & away from you, is almost beyond endurance. I can hardly be bothered to join in any conversation at all at meals, just sit there thinking this about you & that about you - except when it is about something which affects us, such as how to end the war, or what will happen to us here

when the war is over. This is not very cheery or happy writing, but what can I say, darling. And perhaps it will make you feel better – I hope it will – to know how forlorn & hopeless I am without you. I think perhaps I shall feel better when, at last, I have a letter from you. But, up to now, we have been so very completely cut off, there has been no means of knowing how you are, or what you are doing, or where you are living, or about the baby – & then every day I hear of more air raids on London & district. It is impossible not to feel concerned about you, but that is not the chief thing really, because I do not in my heart feel that anything can or will happen to you – or to me either – it is just purely & simply loving you & missing you, my dearest darling. And this is not a thing about which anything can be done. But it is a thing which seems to grow – missing you more & more frequently – & realising more & more how deep my love for you goes & how I am nothing without you. And that is what I mean when I say you will be sweeter & more darling to me, when this arrives.

I am dying to hear that you love me.

I think about you, darling Barbara, in all sorts of places & at all kinds of times during the time that we have known eachother - the more I think the more perfect & lovely & incomparable you become to me. I'm being very serious, my sweetest Barbara, & not being oversentimental. I do so much want you to know & understand all that I am thinking of you. I also think about you a great deal as to what you are doing at this moment & during this day - walking along a street the way you walk - talking to people - washing, your face at night & your feet in the bath - in the morning - putting on your stockings & changing them & drinking a gin, so very slowly. And I think too of your hair & your mouth & your eyes & all the parts of your body, & it makes me very happy to think how well I know them & love them - & sad again at how much I miss all you & all of you. Never can there be anyone so completely suited & united in harmony with anyone, as you are to me, my sweetest. I do hope you think the same of me. It makes me, my darling, able to lie in bed & think of you in such a way that I almost feel I am loving you & kissing you &

talking to you. And I can almost feel your
sweet body against mine, & your arms round me &
your lips, & your hair in my eyes. And when I
go to sleep, I turn around & imagine you against
me again. And this is all very sad too, but it
does help - & I feel I am very much better off than
people who don't think at all, or others who only
think about what they can find when they get
to the next port. And this may sound out of
place at the moment, & it is certainly unnecessary,
but perhaps you will not mind if I say it
again - you may even like me to - but, my
own darling, there is no possible chance of
my ever being in any way at all unfaithful
to you. It would spoil altogether all that I
think of you, & I will never allow that to
be spoiled. And if you will believe that
implicitly, & if it makes you happy, it must
does make me happy as well.

Oh. damn & black - this war.

It is now 10.30 & I feel like bed - so goodnight
darling - until tomorrow.

Saturday, 2nd Nov

It is just after lunch, & very hot again
today - in fact I think this must be the
hottest day we have had so far. The sun
is utterly brilliant, the sea is very smooth,
& the sea & the sun merge indistinguishably.

There is much to tell you about darling, & must get started again. I must not sit at this writing table all the time thinking about you & pining for you & writing about how I want you, though I could quite easily do nothing but these things. But you would never get any news of me in this way.

Today I am very well & feeling fine - but have not been too good for the last few days. On Tuesday afternoon I had a pretty awful turn ache, but put this down to eating & drinking too much & too many strange things in port. But in the evening this developed into stabbing pains, low & on the right side of the tum. I also had a sore throat, which somebody said usually went with appendicitis. So, feeling very sorry for myself, & wondering if the M.O. was also a surgeon, I went along to see the man. He sent me to bed & came & sounded my chest & prodded my tum & looked down my throat, & told me to stay there. I had a fairly painful night & hardly slept at all - the doc brought me some pills & gargle in the morning. By lunch time I was much better, & the doc came again & said I could get

up at 1ea time - that I had had a slight temperature the night before, that I had got out of order & some cholic. Yesterday, I felt perfectly well, but a little tottery & fragile - today I am quite alright again. But I don't think I would have injured an appendix on this boat - or any other boat really.

And about my personal well being & general appearance - with particular reference to your final instructions - my dear! I am not getting fat - in fact I have had to take my trouser fastenings in a bit. My hair is certainly growing faster - & I think a little thicker; but the grey hairs seem to have increased - you don't mind those, do you? I clean my teeth religously night & morning - with Gibbs S.R. & my new tooth brush, & also use the wooden pickers. I wash - in the best places - once a day, & also use flannel. I expect you noticed that I left behind the tin you gave me - but I managed to buy another at the shop on board. I bought a bottle of acetic acid at the last port, & am now waging unremitting war on my warts. They only had silver nitrate on the ship - but that made an

even worse mess of my nose than the stuff you used on me at Vera's.

I will render another full report next month. I have changed my balmain since coming on board. You remember the wretched light! He wasn't much use in England, but it did not matter so much there, & I thought I could take him in hand here. But it was hopeless — nothing ever seemed to happen at all. The washing of clothes is a fairly difficult matter, with only cold water & a limited supply of that, & no facilities for drying at all, & one iron between hundreds. Other people managed, but all the poor light could do was to have an ever increasing bundle of my good clothes, tied up inside my good pyjamas, & leave it in the bathroom next door, where it was splashed & soaked in sea water, & everything going rotten & smelly. As a result of repeated requests, orders, cajolings & threats, he finally brought himself to wash one shirt, one pair of pants, one pair of socks & two hankies, which he laid on my bed, clean but quite wet. With which he disappeared completely & for hours, with my pen

which I had lent him the day before, the key to my bag. I then became furious & sent for Light the sergeant, & cursed the former good & strong & sacked him on the spot. The poor fault burst into tears & made faces like I don't know what, & said he wasn't idle & he had tried to do his best. He went to the door but kept turning back, blubbering & saying he had tried. So I called him back & he admitted that he was nervous, so I told him the sgt would look after him specially & he must come & see me whenever he is in trouble. It is a shame really - people like that are complete misfits - but what can be done about it I do not know. If it was possible to return such people to jobs at home, in industry, I mean, there would be abuse. While in the army, they are liabilities.

Anyway - I now have an excellent little man called Brown. He does everything with a smile & keeps me & my clothes in perfect order. He is far too familiar, but is so cheerful & quite respectful about it - it is impossible to stop.

him. He comes in in the morning & says "How did you chaps sleep last night"? He talks to me about "you & your mates" & pinches cigarettes at me & tells me I'm welcome — & stays chatting to all of us. There's really nothing that can be done about it — I certainly prefer it to shyness or dumbness.

At the moment I am nearly half way through "The Daring Young Man" — by William Saroyan. It is short stories — & they are very sensitive & stark & to the point & pungently written in a style of his own. It is a Penguin & I think you would like them. I have also read "Decline & Fall" by Evelyn Waugh — it was very witty & amusing & I enjoyed it — but I don't think he is quite as devastating as people make out — or as he apparently thinks he is himself.

My next book is "Turgenev" — by I forget who. Terence says it is very clever, very salacious, & too salacious in parts.

I shall see.

Sunday. Nov. 3rd.

Today is very hot + sunny again, but much clearer than yesterday - + where the sea meets the sky, it is a clear cut line of almost violet - except in the line of the sun, when it is brilliant silver - more like super moonlight. And while I am on the subject of the beauties of the vasty deep, I must tell you about phosphorescence. This is a thing about which I have often heard, but never really taken the trouble to imagine what it looked like. It occurs + is visible always during darkness at + about the ship's water line, + looking down from 50-60 above it looks like bright pieces of light about the size of a small plate, + comes away from the side of the ship + swirls away in the wash + is lost. It fascinates me to watch it. And then other times it is different. I looked out of the port hole when going to bed one night last week + saw that the ship's waves - the crests of them - were solidly phosphorescent + bright white lights - + then I thought that our waves were going a long way away from us. +

realised that it was not being caused by the ship & that they were all like this – & as we were going through rollers at the time & as it was a clear night – it was possible to see these luminous crests for miles round. It was a wonderful sight & I wished again that you were with me. And another time when it was exaggerated, it could be seen coming away from the wakes of the other ships, like solid sheets of white flame – & this from probably a mile away.

I have spent most of today on deck, reading & walking about looking at the sea – & had one game of deck Tennis, for exercise.

This morning I went to church service – there were some good hymns & the sincere padre took the prayers – but the sermon was by a droopy young padre, & he just discoursed breathily & in rather a la de da voice on what was Christianity & he seemed quite pleased when he had finished. Last Sunday, yet another padre preached the sermon & he startled & rather embarrassed everybody by dashing off, in a very loud voice, into an involved & rather seditious political harangue. During the last few sentences

he managed to work in something about God & what we are fighting for, & then announced the number of the next hymn in the same breath. He sits at the next table to us & never appears to speak - so I think he must know this off by heart.

I forgot to tell you darling - when I came on this ship, I started to grow my moustache. It was sprouting away quite bravely, in a large sweeping curve, & I had started to stroke the bristles upwards - but I whipped it off - rather painfully - after six days. There are so many weak kneed, silly young men on this ship, & they nearly all go in for the things, that I just could not bear it any longer. And so off it came. In any case, I do think they are affected - it cannot be otherwise. I persuaded Mac & Eric to join me in the venture - but theirs lasted only a few days longer than mine. It spoiled Mac's beauty - & Eric looked more like a rather dirty Chinese coolie than he usually does.

I also forgot to tell you that I met one man I knew, when I came onto this ship. He came dashing & smiling up to me & called me Harry, old boy - but I had to ask him his name. This turned out to be Tomlinson. I used to know him very vaguely in Altrincham. He is a very bogus major, & extremely fussy & creepy & generally irritating. He has a very blonde, sack of potatoes, pudding faced wife, & keeps on insisting that she was an old friend of mine. Twice he has dug me in the ribs, leering, & told about six people how his wife is an old flame of Harry's, the old dog. If he does it again, I shall tell him that if his wife has told him that, she is complimenting herself. Even if it were so - it's a bloody thing to say, don't you think. But I manage to get back with a good morning & an odd smile now, so that is better, & I hope I see the end of him when we get off this ship.

And another thing about my personal appearance before I forget. Would you be very upset if I came home with an arm tattooed? A snake, or a dragon or a few daggers, or perhaps Barbara in pretty letters with some pretty flowers about? I have always rather hankered after this, & if you would not like it, you must tell me, in case I get the urge sometime in one of these places.

Monday Nov 14th.

I had meant to write some more last night, but the dining saloon is closed after dinner on Sundays, & it is the only place cool enough & quiet enough for writing. Also we had rather a party last night. A nice young man called Ted Morris was having his first wedding anniversary, & we thought it would cheer him up & make it a bit more of a day for him if we entertained him to drinks before dinner. We managed to do this quite successfully & he didn't really know whether to laugh or cry when we had finished. We had two enormous jugs full of champagne cocktail, which was gorgeous - & cost us 6/- each. I thought of St Martins, & the funny evening at Rochester when you went to sleep in the ladies.

I have been thinking about you so unceasingly yesterday & today - & I am dying to write passionately & lovingly - it is the only outlet I have - but - I simply must start telling you about our call in port - it is six days since we left, & if I do not begin I

should be forgetting things.

I sent off the cable, & I hope this arrived safely; as I said in another letter, I had hoped & prayed to be able to get a reply from you, but we were not staying long enough & so it was impossible. I was terribly disappointed. I also posted letter No 2, 31 pages, & letter No 3, 2 pages, & I hope these arrive safe & sound & soon.

It is really a shame that I cannot tell you the name of the place & all about it - but I shall just have to do my best without this. It is certainly another technique again, having to write spacing fly in this way, & bloody annoying to me. It is quite bad enough to have to go to these faraway places without you, but it is a bit too much when I cannot even tell you about them in a letter.

We were just in sight of land when I woke up on deck at 7-30. It was very dim & distant & mountainous - & at 9-30, after breakfast, was still a long way off.

In anticipation of getting to this place I had a very silly dream the night before. It was that the ship was going along through a narrow river or canal with green trees & meadow on either side; & then soon we came to a number of blocks, loosely built of stone like the road blocks at Warrenpoint; it seemed impossible that we could negotiate these, but we managed it somehow & arrived safely. I wonder if Martin's dream book could explain this one.

But, to return to realism, we were riding at anchor just outside the harbour at about 11-30. The town & the country & the mountains looked fantastically lovely in the morning sun, & everybody was itching to get on land again – it was just three weeks since leaving England. But it was very annoying, because we had led the way in, & we then had to watch the other ships go into harbour before us. & we were the last to tie up, at about 2-30. And then it was not until 6 o'clock that we could get off this ship – & all afternoon we had watched people pouring off the other ones. And it was during the afternoon that we learned that our stay was going to be a short one, & not the four days we had expected.

Rex & Ian & Eric & Terence & myself went off together – we had to dodge the two bad type majors, who were rampant for women & to come with us. We told them that we were not rampant, nor even faintly desirous for women & that we just wanted to have a look round, have dinner & drink – but they didn't seem to be able to understand this at all, & said we were shy old dogs. Very obtuse very bad type – so we just had to lose them, which we did very

Quickly, & we all leapt into a taxi & made straight for the cable office. I felt very relieved when my cable to you had been sent off, that the call in port had been worth while & now it didn't matter what happened.

Our taxi was a magnificient six seater Packard, with a large Union Jack waving on the bonnet, a radio, & on the dashboard a photograph of a beautiful lady with nothing on but a scanty pair of pants. We felt that the driver was ready for anything. We kept him on after cabling, & went for a drive round & then up the mountain behind the town - thereby reversing the view of that morning. It was also very lovely, but I preferred the one from the sea.

By this time, it was nearly dark - & we set off to a place the taxi man had told us about, by good luck or my good management, we got a table straight away: the place was absolutely packed. We had a marvellous dinner. Two large sherries each, hors d'oeuvres, sole colbert, 4 bottles of white wine of the

country, a mass of mushrooms & bacon & warm fat, 3 bottles of red wine of the country, coffee, liqueurs of the country, & large cigars - & the bill, including tips, was £3-15-0 for the five of us. We got very happy, & very miserable, very sentimental, & really felt very much better than we had done since leaving England. By this time it was fairly late, & we wanted to go on somewhere & drink, but this was not too easy, & eventually the only places were one or two night clubs in the town & a club about eight miles away. None of these seemed to appeal to us - the main reason for this being that Rex & Flo were in charge of the party, felt too homesick to dance. Eventually, we were told of a hotel where we might be lucky, so we took a taxi & drove about two miles to this place. We were not able to get us any drinks, so we walked into the lounge & found a few people still up & gradually engaged them in conversation.

It was not very long before they were all talking to us, & soon after that they said would we like a party, because if so they could get a crate of beer & some whiskey, & we could all go in one of their bedrooms. It was a pleasant hotel & they were very pleasant people, & so we hastily agreed. We had lost Terence by this time - he didn't think this hotel was quite smart enough for him - & the four of us decided we would stay the night at this hotel. We had decided earlier to sleep on board, as it seemed a waste of money to do other wise - but by this time, it seemed a good idea to sleep again in a real bed on dry land & wake up in the morning & have a bath & so on. So we went back to the ship for our night things & washing things - when we arrived back at the hotel the party was all lined up in a man called Snowy's bedroom & waiting for us. We had a grand time, drank an awful amount of stuff & talked about their coming & the war & our families & so on, & finally went to bed about 4.0 am. Rex & I were sharing a room with twin beds - we had insisted on this, so as in the morning we could talk to each other. I could pretend he

was Barbara & she could pretend I was Marjorie. I think the manager thought at first there was something a shade funny about us. Mac & Erin had a room each. In the morning one of the men woke us up with cups of tea & aspirins, had baths run for us, & then produced bottles of iced lager. These people were really amazingly kind to us. We then had a very hearty breakfast & went down into the town. First of all we went to the Bank to get some money. They had refused to take my travellers' cheques on the ship, which I thought was pretty ridiculous, but did not matter, because I had backed out for three weeks on £6-10-0 - so that's not too bad, is it? After that we walked slowly round the town & had a good look at it & its shops & places. Then we went back to the ship to find out if anything had happened that we should know about. The orders were that we had to be back on board at 11-0 p.m. that night, & that we must stay in the town in case we moved earlier, when the sirens would go off. This was another disappointment, because we had intended to take

a car & drive 30-40 miles into the country & make a day of it & really see things. However we still enjoyed ourselves.

You remember hearing from Timmy that a friend of mine, Gordon Duxbury, was going east. When I was in the Bank I heard from a man that he was in another ship & had gone back there for lunch, so we went off to find him.

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Just been down for tea. I hope all these long stories do not bore you, darling. I don't really think so - but in any case there is so little real news, & there is the censorship which makes things more difficult than you would imagine - & no letters from you to reply to. And so I think you will like my letters to be as long as they possibly can be, & so I just go on telling you about things. And I like doing this because all the time I am thinking of you & seeing you, it gives me a feeling of sharing things with you & not being so entirely separated. And also I find it very easy to write & don't have any trouble in thinking what to say. As time goes on I shall probably become more practised & so

more verbose. The one difficulty is the heat & the stickiness, which make it impossible to write fast, because my hand will not slide over the paper but has to be picked up & put down again after nearly every word. This probably accounts for my writing remaining legible. And then every few minutes I have to take my hankie & wipe my hands dry again, & my right arm which makes the paper wet.

Well - I was looking for Gordon Duxbury. He was not on his ship & did not come on while we were waiting - but we were kept waiting so long by some friends of his who insisted he would be there any minute. That we got a little drunk doing it - except Eric who got very drunk, & was talking a whole lot of rubbish drivel in that damn silly voice of his. So we decided to give him the slip, as we were pretty fed up with him by then. He's a decent chap, Eric, but by God he is boring, never, never makes an intelligent remark about anything. In addition to which he is so painfully

pompous & far back, & I really believe quite pleased with himself. I have christened him Pompous Percy — or else Chang, because he looks a bit Chinese, especially when he wakes up in the morning, when he almost is Chinese. So the Rex & I swooped off to get some late lunch. We had some very good Wiener Schnitzels at a place & a bottle of Champagne of the country — 6/6 a bottle. I hope I'm not making you jealous, darling. We then went to see Pride & Prejudice (why do they spell the latter, then?) This was a most remarkable thing to do, as it seems wrong to come to a strange city in a strange country — & go to the flicks. But we saw the Cinema & we saw this film as & we just wanted to see it, & so in we went. Rex was pretty right by then & went fast asleep at once — but he said it was a splendid film & he had enjoyed it. I wonder have you seen it — I think you must have as I remember you talking to me about it — or was it the play you had seen or the book you had read. I thought it

was a wonderful film & enjoyed it & appreciated it more than any I have seen for a long time. It is the first time that I have seen Greer Garson, & I think she is quite perfect, in appearance & as an actress & in the way she acted this part. All the other people were so good too - even Edmund Gwenn, & particularly the woman, I forget her name, who was Lady de Bergh, who was magnificient - except perhaps Mary Boland who rather annoyed me: she was very funny at times, but I thought, over did the part badly, & made too much of a burlesque of it. Laurence Olivier, of course, was made for his part.

It all made me think about Lisa & couldn't help having some tears all to myself. Things like this do make me feel so frightfully sad - beautiful & gracious young women growing up into women having their love affairs & getting married & all about them. Lisa would have been such a lovely & gracious clever & sweet & witty young person - because of her own personality & qualities - & because of your-

- & our bringing up. And it is so tragic that we should be denied the pleasure & joy of this - quite apart from losing her as a child.

You do like me to talk about Lisa, don't you, darling? I think about her very often, always every day - & I like to say something about her from time to time. There is nobody else to whom I can talk.

After coming out of the cinema - we went shopping, & we had to hurry; as it was 5-30 & the shops shut at 6-0. I wanted a number of things from the chemist - some elastic to keep my stockings up - & some more writing paper & some long envelopes - my letters are too fat to fold four times & put in an ordinary envelope. In the shop where I bought these, the man had some good books, & I decided to send you one for Christmas. I hope to be able to send Christmas presents & wishes from our destination to arrive in time - but it seemed a good idea to send one from here. I hope you

will like the book I sent. The man in the shop was very kind & helpful, & offered to make the parcel & post it off, if I gave him the address — so I allowed him to do this — & also asked him to write on the parcel — No letter enclosed — do not open before Christmas day. I hope you will obey this instruction — even if the Censor does not.

I must stop now. I am thinking about you very tenderly, darling — most of the time. Love & kisses to you, dearest Barbara. H.

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Wednesday. Nov. 6th.

Today I am wanting to write about you — but I must catch up on my story of the day in part, & after that I shall be free, & I'm sure just as ready to write about you.

I spent a long time yesterday censoring the men's letters, & so did not write any more to you. I had a whole lot of Bradford men's letters to do. I really could have told they came from Bradford without looking at the addresses. They were so typically narrow & mingy &

looking in humour. One chap wrote sixteen pages to his wife, all about what a good time he had in port, & comparing the place, unfavourably, to Bradford - never even mentioned that he loved his wife, & finally finished up by saying that he hoped all she wished for him would come true. Extraordinary. To continue my story - we had finished our shopping, but had lost Nan in the process. We were in a great hurry, she just could not keep up with us - I don't think he could walk straight enough. So Rex & I went to have a drink & talked to some local people, who were, politically, very interesting. But I cannot tell you about it.

We then decided to go back to the Hotel - we had been invited for dinner, but had left it open as we were hoping to get into the country. We also thought that Nan & Eric would have migrated back there. We got up there at 7-20 & found the party complete once again. We were treated to an excellent dinner, & given lots to drink. They were a grand lot, these people. There was Snowy, who was a bachelor - a middle aged mother with two daughters - one pretty one with a husband in the army, & a baby - & one plain one with no husband. Then

there was a doctor, a man called Kelly, who had hairy arms like a bear had played international Rugger. And various other people. They were incredibly pleased to see us & wanted to do all they could for us - they were very generous too. The pretty married daughter, Julia, her name was, promised to write to you, to Rex's wife - tell you she had seen me that I was well, which was very kind of her I hope she does it. Possibly her letter would go quicker, than mine through military censorship.

All the people were terribly good to the troops - there was not much opportunity for them to get drink, which was just as well - but there were a number of places in the town where they could go were taken for free meals, I believe the meals they were given were really marvellous better bigger than anything they had ever thought possible. Then hundreds & hundreds of them were picked up by people in cars taken for a ride round & then home for enormous great meals. All the letters home that I have read are full of praise for the hospitality they met & the way they were treated. I think it is very good - don't you?

— after dinner, we were all in very good form

& did a great deal of singing in the lounge. One of the women was extremely accurate & powerful on the piano & also had a voice which nearly took the roof off. Eric became hopelessly drunk & was doing dances with some strange woman, throwing himself about & trying to lift her up & so on. It was really ridiculous & rather revolting. As I said to Rex - Eric has neither the figure nor the face for capers of this sort. Finally, the time came to go back to the ship, after terrific good byes & thankyous, we were driven back by the doctor & Holly, armed with two bottles of red wine & a bottle of liqueur, which they presented to us. More kindness you see. I'm sure we don't do these things to colonial troops.

We pushed off the next morning at 7.30. It was a misty morning, there was nothing to look at as we left.

It had been a very good enjoyable stay. I regretted not having been able to get about & see more, but even so I had a grand time, look back at it with a lot of pleasure - amusement. It was great to be on land again & to see a large town with brilliant lights & no black out. And it was great to see & hear of everybody being so welcome - even though there are

severe political problems in this country. It was also good to see such plenty - apparently such a high standard of living for the ordinary people.

I do hope, darling, that rationing is not getting too severe at home that you are having enough to eat & enough of the things you need. You must tell me about these things when you write.

Thursday. Nov. 7th.

Coming on a trip like this makes one realise the difficulties of carrying all the vast quantities of food which we need in England.

And, darling one, about any plans for what you are going to do. It is certain, I hope, that before you receive this letter, I shall have heard from you, & we shall have been able to exchange a few cables, & so know about what we are both doing, or more about it anyway.

But I told you in a previous letter that there had been an Army Council Instruction which said that wives of serving officers were allowed to come out to the country to which we thought I would be going. Now it seems that I was mistaken, that country was not included, or any other country in which hostilities are taking place. So it would seem that we must start thinking again, unless, of course, I am going to a country which is on the list. Oh, it is depressing & difficult, darling sweetheart. I think all the time about how soon & with what safety

we can contrive to be together again. It is the thing of most importance at the moment & will continue to be until we have achieved it by one means or another. It is possible that there may be a new A.C.I. on the subject, but I should think that this would be in the direction of greater restrictions. The one I refer to above said, I believe, that the Govt took no responsibility for the passage, insurance, safety, & so on, but that there may be reparations after the end of hostilities. Then there is the possibility of coming out just as a private person, & we can both make inquiries about this. And then there is nursing, or A.T.S. or some such job — & also a civil job. And did you write to Berlin — or should I? And then there is the question of safety — I cannot make up my mind whether it is safer to make the journey or to stay in England — or how safe you would be at this end. I think the journey must be fairly safe really — but it would have to be the long way round. I mentioned in my last letter that there might be a chance of me getting a transfer home on compassionate grounds — I wonder could you be given a permit on the same grounds. We can both inquire about that also: I suppose you would have to write or see War Office — though God knows what departments I'm afraid we were too optimistic in the first

place, & should have gone to see that General in Ireland. And still it may be for the best - who knows - I'm damned if I do.

I think this letter will go into the post box tomorrow or Saturday - which is earlier than I expected - & then that I shall be able to post another one in about a week's time. I have no idea at all when you will receive this. I feel sure it will be before Christmas, both this one & others - but in case not, & in case I cannot get to a cable office, I will be thinking about you on the day, & about how much I love you & want to be with you. And the same, sweetheart, on December 7th - & on December 14th. But I feel sure I shall be able to cable, & write by Air Mail.

Have I said it before? - I am, by now, quite fed up with this journey. It goes on & on & every day is always the same - never anything new & never anything different. It is terribly hot, & the food by now is getting rather dull & boring. And always the same people, & they mostly begin to pall a bit. Rex & Joe are the only ones now who do not get on my nerves from time to time. I'm afraid I must have given you a pretty poor picture of Joe, as being always booped. She was the only time you met him, & in addition to that, did not speak at all, or hardly at all.

Actually - I think this is a legitimate use of the word. He talks quite a lot when you get to know him, very intelligently too; though he is by nature a quiet person & does not chatter very much. He is a solicitor attached to the Lancashire County Council, & at Oxford took his degree in Economics & Political Economy. He is more than a match for Trevor. He certainly does drink harder than most people - but then he says he likes it, there's nothing else to do, it relieves boredom & bores off. He has a secret sorrow - his girl friend is already married. The argument about his teeth is now settled: they are clackers. This was proved when he appeared without them one morning. Nobody liked to ask what the matter was, until eventually I did. He said he did not mind me asking at all, he could not find them. Had no idea what had happened. Dreadful predicament, wasn't it? He now wears a spare set or pair, but only spasmodically, as they are not very comfortable.

Rex is my constant companion, as I said before, I like him very much. For some reason, he is very attached to me, & says if we become separated on arrival, he will apply for a transfer to the machine guns. He is so pleasant & amusing & when he feels browned off or depressed or I do, he knows how to keep quiet. Also, knowing each other's wires a little, we can be homesick together, with rather more point than other

people. Incidentally, though this may not interest you much, he has played six times for the Army as rugger, not counting one unofficial game against the French Army in Paris, when our XV contained 14 internationals — Rex.

Barbara darling, I'm still thinking about how soon we can be together again. And there is one possibility about which I have been thinking a great deal the last few days, but I did not know whether to talk about it to you or not. It is the idea of you coming out to South Africa. If you did this, it might be easier to come together from there — or I might find it easier to get leave to you down there — or we might stay there permanently after the war. And in any of these cases, you would be safer there. I don't really know what to think. In one case I do not know what you will say. It is a very wonderful country, it is said always that they want more British people there, that if you are a person with any guts & intelligence at all, you cannot go wrong. I do not feel too excited about going back to Bradford after the war, I'm sure you do not. But you must not broadcast that sentiment at all, because my half salary is very useful, there is at least a possibility that I shall need my job again.

Then there is the question of what you would do there - alone, in a strange country. People there say there are plenty of jobs - I can give you the address of that girl who is writing to you - one of the bogus majors has a cousin there, who, he says, would help any friend of a friend of his. I will give you the address later on. About money - you would have to ask Gordon about how any pay & Association pay may be got out of the country. This may all seem very scatter brained to you darling - but it can hardly be otherwise. The idea kind of grows on me - I know there must be many snags about something as important as this. When there has been no opportunity to go into it at all - I have no idea what you think & I cannot talk to you about it. But, I thought I would write about it - something may come of it. Have you any relations there nowadays?

I have been talking to Rex about it too, it is making him think as well - he is going to mention it to Marjorie. Perhaps you would talk to her. I expect you have her address, but if you have not, it is - Mrs Rangecroft - 12, Carlisle Road - Hampton - Middlesex.

In Marjorie's case, on account of her baby - she would have to start soon - or wait some time.

And now darling, I think that is the end of news & discussion, & before close up this letter, I must tell you some more about loving you & missing you, & the happiness & misery which I am caused through these. You must [illegible] sure you will forgive me if I repeat myself in this letter, & say the same things again & even say them in the same. But I do not read back, & normally I would have written you five or six letters in the same time & had the same number - or slightly fewer - back from you. And I find darling one, that I think the same thoughts about you over & over again: if I find that same thing I think makes me very happy, or very close to you, or even very unhappy - I make a point of thinking those things about you again - & see if I can get the same satisfaction out of them again, or even improve on them. Do you know, my darling, we have been together more than six years now. And there are

so many lovely times lovely things about you to remember. I am becoming a sort of expert at missing you loving you from several thousand miles away — a most unsatisfactory substitute for the real you, but it is a necessity. I went to bed early last night it was very warm on deck a perfect night the first time all day that I had been cool. And I was able to lie on the top of my bed look at the stars & think of you — when I could not think hard enough, then close my eyes. And sweetest dearest one, I could almost very nearly see & feel every part of your body the exact shape of your face sound of your voice. For a long time now sweetest heart, you have been very near so very intimate with me — but it has almost taken this being away from you to make me understand how perfect you have been to me & how perfect you are. I am thrilled my darling, when I think, as I do so much, of how happy I have been with such a person as you. And I am even more thrilled when I think of me making you happy. You have told me that I

do make you happy, that you loved me - & you told me that I took your heart with me - & I do feel that from you she has so much depth of feeling - that means so much & you must mean what you say. I am frantic to have a letter from you & to hear again that these things are true. I feel they will be, just because of the kind of person you are - I would go mad if I really thought there was any doubt about it - but I do want to hear you say so. Sometimes, I think of my imperfections - charming away at the works being very dull; not learning very much about art; so as you could discuss & talk about these things to me - & I could make an intelligent answer; or disagree intelligently, or agree in such a way that you would feel more sure. And of the unkind things I have said & done to you. And I think you may be saying to yourself - enough - I will start a new life & away with this dull unkind man.
But I don't think these things much or for

long, or very seriously. I don't think I have been very unkind or very often. I do think I have worked too hard, & must have been rather dull - but I did want to make some money for us, & those flaked bloody Excessive dividends did make it incomparably more difficult by not dealing with that silly little man. And I do think I have been very wrong about art - both to myself & to you. My only excuse is hard work, again - but that is not a very cast iron one, & you could knock it into pieces. But I have decided to rectify myself about that - & to start this as soon as possible. If I am in or near a town with a bookshop, I want to buy good books - not only about sculpture & painting - & read them well, & then post them home to you. I hope this is allowed, that I shall not always buy books you have read or do not like.

And darling, I wonder if I have been loving enough & appreciative enough, of you. Sometimes I'm afraid & annoyed to think that I may not have been - but again, I do not-

think this is really true. But I do seem to realise things more now than I did before - & it is lovely to do so. Darling Barbara, do believe that I'm not being sentimental or exaggerating when I tell you that you are perfection of beauty, figure & intelligence & I love, adore, & worship you - & my one truly ambition in this world at this moment - as far as I can see, is to be together with you again. Oh. dearest sweetheart, I do love you so much, & loathe being away from you. I want to be with you, talk to you, & make love to you, very gently, very passionately - I want to kiss you for a long, long time, I want to see you walking & sitting, & naked & half undressed - I want to touch you in all sorts of different places - I want you to touch me & tell me you love me, & kiss me & say things to me that I like, & admire me - & say you are happy with me - & always want to be

wit me - kiss me again - squeeze my black heads (I hope I have not got any) - ack my opinion - take it - love me tell me you love me. I want all these things & more, wit all my mind & fibre.

And I want to be wit you again soon, so that all these things can be possible.

Look after yourself darling - be very careful. God bless you.

All my love kisses love for ever always.

Your loving Harry.

Sat. Nov. 9th.

The major's cousin's name & address is -

Thos. A. Gentles Esqr.
The Scottish Tube Co. of S.A. Ltd.
Craig's Battery
Woodstock
Capetown.

The major is Bob Gentles, who says he is a very kind & genuine man & v. patriotic, & is sure he would help by way of advice & arranging passage & permits etc: help you if you were here

The girls name, I think, is

Mrs Talia Bauer.
Ritz Hotel
Seapoint.
Capetown.

Do you think I am mad?

To: Mrs H. Massey
2, Lennox Fields.
Stanmore.
Middlesex.
England

J.H. Massey

(4)

H sea

PAID

Mrs H. Massey.

C/o Mrs Nash

2. Warren Fields

East Lodge

Stanmore

Monksfield Manor

Middlesex.

W. Ascot Berks

England.